Data Used in the Clean Water Action Plan Unified Watershed Assessment

Name of Data Layer: Instream Physical Habitat (non-tidal)

Definition: Multi-parameter indicator of instream physical habitat quality in first- through third-order non-tidal streams developed by the MBSS.

Data Source: MBSS

Data Type: Condition **_X_** Stressor **_X_** Vulnerability ___ Trend ___ Growth ___ Other___

Method of Calculation: The Instream Physical Habitat Indicator score is based on seven measures of instream habitat quality that are scored for each site based on observations of habitat condition in streams during sample visits. The seven habitat measures rate the quantity and quality of physical habitat available in the stream for fish and benthic macroinvertebrate colonization and rate the degree to which the stream channel has been altered due to perturbations in the watershed landscape. A mean for these seven measures was calculated for each sampled site, and the mean habitat score for each 8 digit watershed expressed on a 1 to 10 scale is reported.

Watershed Scale: Tributary Strategy Region ___ USGS 8 Digit ___ MD 6 Digit ___
MD 8 Digit **_X_** MD 12 Digit ___ Any ___

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Clean Water Goal: Yes ___ No **_X_**

Other Natural Resource Goal: Yes **_X_** No ___
If Yes: Benchmark Goal **_X_** Relative Goal
Description of Benchmark Goal: The benchmark for habitat quality is the maximum attainable score. Habitat values reported here are relative to this maximum attainable score.

Assumptions: _____

Comments: The MBSS instream physical habitat metrics and scoring criteria were adapted from USEPA's Rapid Bioassessment Protocols and Ohio EPA's Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index. Preliminary benchmarks for selecting potential candidates for Category I or Category III are: *Top 25% of the Habitat scores (Category III) and Bottom 25% (Category I).*

References: Kazyak, P. 1996. Maryland biological stream survey sampling manual. Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Monitoring and Non-tidal Assessment Division. Annapolis, Maryland.